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ABSTRACT

Noting that in different disciplines the study of communicative competence has focused to varying degrees on referential, social, and directive functions of communication, this paper reviews the three major traditions using the term. The first section of the paper reviews the sociolinguistic tradition, which views communicative competence as situational, interactional, functional, and developmental. The second section discusses the referential tradition, which is concerned with role-taking, comparison skills, and propositional meaning. The third section examines the speech communication tradition, focusing on two strands--social perspective taking and effectiveness of communicator style--and a third strand, restricted to communication education, that has attempted to delimit specific skills appropriate for testing competence within the school. The paper then uses arguments from speech act theory regarding the links between referential and social meaning to argue the need for an interactional definition of communication competence linking referential, social, and structuring aspects of continuing discourse. It concludes with a discussion of the implications of such an integration. An extensive bibliogrpahy is included. (FL)

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Communicative Competence

A Review of Approaches

by

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Communicative Competence:

A Review of Approaches

ABSTRACT

Three disciplinary traditions addressing "communicative competence" are reviewed. The sociolinguistic tradition is seen to focus on situated language use, evaluating meaning on its appropriateness, given cultural knowledge. The referential communication tradition is described as concerned with role-taking, comparison skills, and propositional meaning. The tradition within speech communication, including constructivism, effectiveness of communicator style, and communication education areas, is outlined. Using arguments from speech act theory regarding the links between referential and social meaning, the need for an interactional definition of communication competence linking referential, social, and structuring aspects of ongoing discourse is argued. Implications for such an integration are discussed.

While "communicative competence" is discussed in a variety of settings, from scholarly conferences to legislative assemblies, the term's widespread use is not indicative of a single, much less a clear, meaning. It has been used to denote a list of observable (and often discrete) skills, to identify abstract knowledge, to stand for global developmental abilities displayed in performance, and to label evaluations of effective interaction. In different disciplines, study of communicative competence has focused to varying degrees on referential, social, and directive functions of communication. This paper will review the three major traditions using the term "communicative competence" (or slight variations on it, i.e., communication skill, oral communication skill, etc.) and argue that a theory of communicative competence needs to integrate aspects of all three if is it to effectively probe the development of human communication.

I. The Sociolinguistic Tradition

This set of disciplines using the term "communicative competence" really represents a multiple tradition, involving structural linguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropology, and education. Chomsky's (1965) original use of communicative "competence" was to distinguish knowledge of language structure--which he argued was acquired innately--from its use, or "performance." The goal of structural linguistic study according to Chomsky was to identify the knowledge of an ideal speaker-listener, eliminating the factors of person and situation that necessarily affect a real speaker-listener's actual performance.

Having ruled out the effects of situation, context, and person, structural linguistics could focus on language in the abstract, seeking a "purely structural characterization of linguistic knowledge in terms of abstract rules. . . not

seen as the direct cause of the subject's performance" (Ammon, 1981:16). By the late 60's, however, there had developed clear dissatisfaction with what such a limited view of language could contribute. Especially critical was the realization that such a conception of competence could not account for a child's ability to acquire knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate in particular contexts (Hymes, 1971, 1972).

The break was made most clearly by Dell Hymes (1972), recognized as the originator of the view of communicative competence still prevalent in this tradition today:

> We break irrevocably with the model that restricts the design of language to one face toward referential meaning, one toward sound, and that defines the organization of language as solely consisting of rules for linking the two. . . A model of language must define it with a face toward communicative conduct and human life. (p. 278)

To stimulate development of that model, Hymes (1971, 1972) defined communicative competence as the native speaker's ability, within his/her speech community, to interpret and produce language appropriate to situations.

The focus of concern, thus, moved from syntax to pragmatics, i.e., from concern with abstract structure to examination of the links between speakers and language and its situated use. Moreover, a second re-focusing involved a questioning of Chomsky's conceptualization of language development as innate. In the development of this tradition, Vygotsky's (1962) argument that linguistic control and the organization of a child's behavior are at first external was coupled with the phenomenological argument that intersubjectivity (the functional sensitivity to social interaction) develops through interaction with the

speech community. Thus, studies became clearly directed toward the social and socially developed aspects of communication.

The tradition developed after Hymes's (1971, 1972) re-definition of competence has produced a rich collection of theoretical and empirical work. The organization of a brief review of some of this work below illustrates four essential characteristics that seem to inform the studies in this tradition, namely that communicative competence is situational, interactional, functional, and developmental. The review will be followed by comments on the methods and conclusions of this tradition and some implications of this research.

A. Situational

Approaches to communicative competence in the sociolinguistic tradition have tended to view language use as situated (see, for example, Brown & Fraser, 1979; Erickson & Shultz, 1981; Ervin-Tripp, 1968, 1980; Goffman, 1974; Graham et al., 1981; Gregory & Carroll, 1978; Hall & Cole, 1978; Halliday, 1979; Kreckel, 1981; Scherer & Giles, 1979). The elements and their relationships integrated in the notion of "situation" include setting, type of interaction, and the relationships between participants regarding role and status. Perhaps the most important, however, is the "built in" sense of goal or purpose typified in situation (Brown & Fraser, 1979; Gregory & Carroll, 1978; Hall & Cole, 1978). The philosophical assumption about a speaker's understanding of "situation" is a phenomenological one, viz., that these elements are somehow "learned" and become "known" as part of the stock of common knowledge created in an ongoing way by society, specifically the speech community.

Examples of this research show how the focus on situation has served to clarify the tradition's understanding of communicative competence. Erickson (1981) reports part of a year-long study of kindergarten and first graders,

specifically examining the functions of timing in the social organization of classroom interaction. His study illustrates what Whitehurst & Sonnenschein (1981) call the difference between "knowing how" and "knowing when." Part of the school child's situationally specific communicative competence shown in Erickson's study is the ability to distinguish which communicative acts are appropriate to which segments of the school day (e.g., that one may talk to the teacher quite freely about any topic during play time, but not interrupt her with off-topic comments or questions in a reading lesson).

Hall & Cole (1978) examined the variability of speech of adults and pre-school children in two settings, the classroom and a local supermarket. While they expected to find differences in kinds of talk in the two settings, they found contrasts in only one of their two studies. In the other, speech in the supermarket trip was more like speech in the two classrooms than like the other supermarket trip. Their analysis sheds light on how part of communicative competence is the interactants' ability to structure the "situation" according to its purpose, regardless of the physical setting. While the physical settings of supermarket and classroom were different, the perceived task or purpose (supermarket trip as "school field trip") led to the participants' structuring of their discourse as "classroom talk."

School research has naturally received much attention in this tradition, since it is a pervasive setting and one available to researchers (see, for example, Cook-Gumperz, 1977; Gumperz & Herasimchuk, 1981; Shuy & Griffin, 1981; and Wilkinson et al., 1981). However, some studies have attempted to explore school and home environments to contrast children's behavior and probe situational differences (Philips, 1972). Other studies have examined bilingual and multi-

lingual societies (e.g., Blom & Gumperz, 1972; Scotton, 1972; Scotton & Ury, 1977).

B. Interactional

Viewing communicative competence as interactional focuses on speakers' ability to create interaction as an ongoing negotiation of participant identity and task definition (Scotton, in press). Studies in this tradition have tried to uncover evidence of role adaptation (how speakers signal changes in role) and of communication monitoring (whether and how speakers are aware of changes in interaction and/or the effects of their own and others' linguistic choices). In fact, Goffman (1967) asserts that "situations begin when mutual monitoring occurs and lapse when the next to the last person has left."

Much of the work exploring directives (a type of speech act calling on another to do something) illustrates the belief that communicative competence is interactional (see Ervin-Tripp, 1976, 1977; Mitchell-Kernan & Kernan, 1977; and Olson & Hildyard, 1981). Ervin-Tripp's thesis is that the choice of forms of utterances, specifically directives, is clearly related to the social identity that speakers intend to invoke or to simply recognize as operating in the situation. Her finding in the research on adult use of directives was that "there were relatively consistent differences in the type of directive used, as a function of the social features of the speech situation" (1977:166). Thus, directives provide information (to participants as well as to outside observers) about how to interpret the speaker's view of the ongoing situation and they also allow participants to evaluate each other's intent. Directives also carry some weight or power to influence the other's action; the idea of illocutionary force proposed in Searle's (1969) theory of speech acts is a conceptualization of the interactional power of linguistic choices, clearly dependent upon situationally

defined factors.

Recent research with children (Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Mitchell-Kernan & Kernan, 1977) indicates that, while there are limits to a child's repertoire, early use of directives and responses to them follow the general adult pattern. The "shared knowledge" about how to encode situational differences appears to function as interactional communicative competence quite early, as indicated by Corsaro's (1979) examination of how children gain access to play groups, Edelsky's (1977) account of how sex roles are encoded in speech, and Camaioni's (1979) comparison of child-adult and child-child interactional differences.

C. Functional

Researchers in this tradition have focused on communicative competence as functional, investigating the ongoing management of interaction and the force of different linguistic options, based on situational and interactional constraints. For example, within mainstream American culture, children learn the organizational functions of turn-taking (Ervin-Tripp, 1979), as well as the politeness routines required by society (Gleason & Weintraub, 1976; Greif & Gleason, 1980). Dore's (1977) study of responses to questions indicates how various forms are "heard" differently, depending upon context, showing the functional impact of learning a society's language conventions--another part of shared knowledge. More specifically, Brenneis & Lein (1977) describe children's patterns of settling disputes, a macro-functional use of language.

Note that in this tradition, function is not seen as able to be examined outside of situational and interactional considerations. Situation or context is ultimately the heart of the study of communicative competence following Hymes; situation consistently directs the understanding of "function" as well as the design of its study.

D. Developmental

Throughout these brief reviews of research in the sociolinguistic tradition, it is clear that much of the focus has been on children's acquisition of communicative competence. Some research has involved comparisons to show that children have some aspects basic to adult communicative competence, even at an early age (e.g., Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Gleason & Weintraub, 1976; Greif & Gleason, 1980; Newcombe & Zaslow, 1981). Other research has shown that the communicative competence of young children is different from that of adults, e.g., that their patterns for joining groups are adapted to their specific, situated experience (Corsaro, 1979). Finally, there is evidence for continual adaptation to situation; children will adjust their style of language for younger children (Gleason & Weintraub, 1978), for strangers, for grandparents, etc.

E. Methods

In the sociolinguistic tradition, researchers have examined natural speech, in context, with participants engaged in realistic tasks, in settings where roles and relationships are able to be validated with the participants. Many studies are in-depth examinations, e.g., of one or two classrooms over a year-long period, but there are more and more multiple observation studies, probably due to the maturing of this tradition, which is now ready to build on its initial work. In general, studies in this tradition could be described as "qualitative" or "subjective" in that researchers attempt to find out what is happening in natural settings rather than to manipulate independent variables in controlled settings.

F. Conclusions and Implications

The sociolinguistic tradition has found many ways in which even infants are communicatively competent. Perhaps the methodological bias of looking at what is happening in natural interaction has allowed these researchers to see

how even children negotiate their situations to produce and interpret communication appropriate for their age, role, needs, etc. (See especially Cook-Gumperz, 1977; Corsaro, 1979; Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Gleason & Weintraub, 1976).

While some studies have examined children's progress toward attaining an adult repertoire, definitions of communicative competence within this tradition have not been restricted to "adult" skill and thus have not sparked research designs that test "how far" children have come toward that standard. Fairly consistently, communicative competence has been conceptualized as an ongoing skill by which persons respond to new demands and incorporate new capabilities (e.g., increased cognitive ability, growing vocabulary, etc.).

Two implications for this tradition, given the current state of its research art, then, might be these:

1. Researchers need to examine further what constitutes the ongoing skill of communicative competence, including situational, interactional, functional, and developmental aspects, in order to draw together a more formulated theory. Qualitative researchers are noted (whether it is truly the case or not) for being willing to probe a corpus of data ad infinitum. As Erickson (1977) has recently suggested, it is time to begin the process of generalization about the findings of the studies in this tradition.
2. Researchers need to extend their study of communicative competence as developmental to adult competence. The philosophical position that interaction is ongoingly created suggests that communicative competence is constantly open to development, in fact that it probably requires the kind of monitoring that contributes to ongoing learning. Making the processes of monitoring and development explicit

would aid in the development of both our understanding of communicative competence and of solutions to problems of adult incompetence needed for therapeutic work.

These implications will be probed further after a consideration of the contributions of the two other traditions and their approaches to the construct of "communicative competence."

II. The Referential Communication Tradition

While the shift from syntax to pragmatics was being made in sociolinguistics, a syntactic and semantic focus on language development had captured the attention of cognitive and educational psychologists and psycholinguists. Interested in language as a carrier of thought and the use of language to communicate ideas so that others might understand them, this tradition focused its study on referential communication. Following Piaget (1955), their initial interest was in "seeking to explain levels of performance in terms of underlying cognitive abilities" (Dickson, 1981).

Where sociolinguists were discovering that even infants are communicatively competent in adapting their responses to situational, interactional and functional factors, referential tradition researchers were concluding that even school-age children were quite incompetent (Dickson, 1981). This apparent contradiction is explained partially by the definition of communicative competence assumed in referential studies and partially by methodological factors.

The conceptualization of communicative competence in the referential tradition moved from an early focus on a single underlying factor--role-taking ability--to a more recent conceptualization of it as consisting of a number of components or subskills (Whitehurst & Sonnenschein, 1981). These skills are generally seen to include role-taking as part of a listener component, as well

as to have a comparison component, an evaluation component, and "outside" skill factors. Still another conceptualization focuses study in relationship to the development of propositional meaning, using the framework of cognitive certainty. Each will be briefly explored, followed by comments on methods, conclusions, and implications.

A. The Listener Component

The extent to which a speaker takes the characteristics of the listener into account in conversational interaction was first studied within this tradition as "role-taking." It was based on the Piagetian notion that a child moves from egocentric ways of organizing thought and speech to the adult, sociocentric standard. While enthusiasm for this framework has waned with the failure of experiments to confirm Piaget's notion (Dickson, 1981; Shantz, 1981; Whitehurst & Sonnenschein, 1981), much of the research in this tradition focused on children's failure to communicate effectively and attributed it to their inability to take the role of the listener (Asher & Wigfield, 1981). Criticisms from within the tradition point to the problems of testing role-taking and communicating separately within experiments (Asher & Wigfield, 1981) and of not being able to tell if a speaker assumes or infers similarity of the listener--crucial to knowing if role-taking has occurred (Shantz, 1981).

Flavell (1974) has renewed interest in the component of role-taking or listener awareness, however, by recently suggesting sub-components of this skill: existence--the child's awareness that others have their own perspectives; need--the child's awareness that examining the other's perspective may impact on communication decisions; inference--the child's development of the skill of making accurate assessment of the other's perspective; and application--the child's development of skill in using those inferences to make communication

decisions. As will be seen, Flavell's expansion overlaps with the other major components identified in this tradition.

B. The Comparison Component

Some researchers in this tradition have argued that this skill is logically primary to any of the others, namely the speaker's ability to analyze "a set of stimuli to determine which attributes of a referent distinguish it from non-referents" (Whitehurst & Sonnenschein, 1981) makes either role-taking or evaluation possible. Many of the studies which find improvement in children's referential skills after training have used comparison exercises to build the children's abilities to see differences (Asher & Wigfield, 1981; Dickson, 1981; Whitehurst & Sonnenschein, 1981).

In fact, comparison appears to be the basic analytical component of nearly every approach to referential communication research (Flavell, 1981). Asher & Wigfield (1981), for example, in proposing a "Task-Analytic" approach to replace the earlier role-taking focus, require comparison at several points in explaining the development of oral communication skills. Communication tasks, they explain, require comparisons of this speaker with other speakers, this task with other tasks, the choice of this referent with other possible referents, and finally, this outcome with other possible outcomes.

C. The Evaluation Component

Implied by the comparison tasks in communication, speakers are evaluative, i.e., while rejecting some messages judged to be uninformative, they formulate alternatives (Whitehurst & Sonnenschein, 1981). Although this aspect of referential communication research appears to be fairly recent, it has been explored in relationship to cognitive and comprehension monitoring, by Flavell (1981) and Markman (1981), respectively.

To reject a message as uninformative, speakers need first to make a judgment about the message's information value. Being able to make that judgment may be crucial; Markman (1981) points to a number of studies showing that children often report that they have understood material which is ambiguous or inconsistent. Both she and Flavell (1981) argue that conscious attention to task and to accuracy of comprehension are needed for the development and demonstration of referential communication skills. Markman, moreover, argues for the relationship of the structure of the information to its comprehensibility and for the need to have children practice evaluative skills in relationship to information and explanations.

Thus, evaluation as a component is tied to both of the previous abilities--to compare and to take the role of the other. It adds a focus on the ability of the speaker to direct his or her attention consciously to the decisions to be made in communication.

D. "Outside Skill" Factors

A number of researchers in this tradition, noting the incomplete or inconsistent results of experimental work, have attempted to account for the development of improved referential communication skills by citing "outside" or more global developmental factors. For example, some have observed that the acquisition of a wider knowledge base and an increased vocabulary appears to affect performance of referential communication tasks (Asher & Wigfield, 1981). Others have "lumped" these and other developments into the factor of chronological age. Beaudichon (1981), approaching the stance of the sociolinguistic approach, suggests that interaction with others is a crucial factor in the improvement of referential communication skill, particularly role-taking.

E. Propositional Meaning and Cognitive Certainty

Referential studies are concerned primarily with propositional meaning, i.e., the truth value or well-formedness of utterances in their representation of (reference to) objects in the real world. A typical task used in such research is a test reported by Asher (1976) in which children were asked to choose the most effective among a number of messages. They were then given messages which were either moderately associated with the referent but highly unassociated with the non-referent or highly associated with both the referent and the non-referent. The question the children had to deal with in choosing the "most effective" messages was really which were the more informative. Greenfield & Zukow (1978) argue that the principle of informativeness functions in the correct choice of referents. They point out that the number of possible alternatives facing a child in a referential task creates uncertainty; the elements which reduces uncertainty most should be chosen as the most informative.

Using the framework of propositional meaning and the principle of cognitive certainty or informativeness, researchers in this tradition combine the components discussed previously. The judgment of informativeness is made both in reference to the possible messages referring to the referent and to what can be presupposed about the information already held by the other--a minimal role-taking involvement. The decision about what message is the most informative implies both a comparison among the alternatives (which created the uncertainty in the first place) and an evaluation of their informativeness. This tradition must also take into account chronological differences, clearly recognized in the differentiation of children at one-word and two-word stages, for example.

Some researchers in developmental pragmatics (actually more a part of the sociolinguistic tradition) have also probed the development of early referential

communication skill (Atkinson, 1979; Bates et al., 1979; Ochs et al., 1981). In fact, Atkinson (1979) discusses "prerequisites" for reference, in the need of small children to first get the attention of the listener before transmitting propositional content. Ochs et al. (1981) argue that propositions are also constructed over a sequence of utterances, particularly when the speaker is a child at the one-word stage; they also discuss propositions across speakers and utterances. Common to all these studies, however, is the principle of informativeness--used to predict that speakers' choices will be made on the basis of what part of the proposition will reduce uncertainty.

F. Methods

Typically, research pursued in the referential communication skills tradition takes a random sample of an age group or groups and gives them a (generally complex) referential task, focusing on the evaluation of specific communication skills (Beaudichon, 1981). The task is necessarily artificial in the controlled laboratory setting; care is taken to rule out interference from other factors or to control them. Thus, the methodology could be labeled experimental and quantitative. As a variation, some experiments are preceded by "training" of the subjects, e.g., in comparison skills.

G. Conclusions and Implications

The referential tradition's approach has been to set up expectations and them to test for failure, concluding that children can't do X because they didn't do X in the test setting. As Whitehurst & Sonnenschein (1981), point out, that tells us nothing about the situational doing of X! Thus, the limits of the conclusions drawn in the research of this tradition are the limits of experimental design. Specifically, there have been gaps in the age groups studied--mostly under eleven and under seventeen, according to Dickson (1981). He also

points to serious limits in the number of items actually tested, and to the relative absence of multiple referential communication tasks.

The difficulty in generalizing from these experiments is that they yield little data and few conclusions about how referential meaning is constructed and conveyed in situated interaction. Only the work of the sociolinguists in early propositional meaning has attempted to examine referential communication in natural settings. Thus, among the implications for future work, the following two seem particularly clear:

1. If generalizability is the benefit of the experimental method, then more care should be taken to ensure that what is generalized is truly worth the trouble. More attention should be paid to a wide range of age groups, not merely those that can be easily brought into experimental settings. More items, and items which reflect the findings of research in more naturalistic settings ought to be tested, to begin to bring the work of the two traditions together.
2. Related to the latter point, articulation with other traditions asking similar questions and looking through different methodology at similar phenomena is essential. Some movement in this is apparent in developmental pragmatics, but reference to studies outside the referential tradition is typically absent in the field's bibliographies and reference lists.

III. The Speech Communication Tradition

As persuasion studies began to get "bad press" in the '60's, with people responding negatively to connotations of "manipulation" (Miller & Burgoon, 1978), scholars trained in the rhetoric and persuasion areas of speech communication picked up the term "communicative competence" as an alternative focus for their

study. McCroskey (1981), in fact, recently argued that Aristotle's definition of rhetoric is the earliest definition of communicative competence!

Weinstein's (1969) conception of interpersonal competence as "the ability to control the responses of others" is typical in its persuasion focus. And even Wiemann's (1977) more balanced wording shows the influence of concern with effect of communication on the behavior of others. According to Wiemann, communicative competence is

> the ability of an interactant to choose among available communicative behaviors in order that he (she) may successfully accomplish his (her) own interpersonal goals during an encounter while maintaining the face and line of his (her) fellow interactants within the constraints of the situation (p. 198)

While not all within the speech communication tradition would agree that social factors are important (see, for example, Monge et al., 1982), there is a consistent focus in this tradition on the achievement of specific interpersonal goals. Work in the area of communicative competence has proceeded in a number of directions within the tradition, including two which represent the bulk of attention to communicative competence: social perspective-taking and effectiveness of communicator style. A third focus, restricted to communication education, has attempted to delimit specific skills appropriate for testing of competence within the schools. Each will be briefly discussed, followed by consideration of methods, conclusions and implications.

A. Social Perspective-taking

The constructivist school within speech communication (Delia, 1977) built its theoretical stance around the concept of role-taking, borrowing from the work of Piaget and the research of the referential communication tradition.

However, role-taking could hardly be considered an alien notion to a tradition that has always focused on audience analysis in both rhetoric and persuasion. What is different in the constructivist view is its attention to how attributional and evaluative aspects of social cognition are developed; the theory is a conscious linking of cognitive-developmental and personal construct theories (Delia & OKeefe, 1979).

Research in this area has aimed to examine the developmental path of role-taking ability. Clark & Delia (1976, 1977) describe it as moving from the beginning state of the child's having no recognition of the perspective of the other; to a low level of recognition where others' needs and desires are focused on only in terms of the speaker's own needs; to higher levels of including the awareness of others' needs, but counter-arguing or refuting them in messages; to the highest level, where speakers use messages that highlight the advantages to the persuadee. While the parallel to Flavell's (1974) developmental pattern is evident, the theory reflects the typical assumption of speech communication in its explicit references to persuasion.

Studies reported by constructivists indicate some evidence for the development of interpersonal constructs. Delia & O'Keefe (1979), for example, found marked individual differences in social cognition and communicative performance as a function of the complexity of children's interpersonal cognitive systems. By focusing on individual communicators, these researchers have probed the relationships between cognitive development and communication performance, finding shifts in evaluation and attributional orientation. Delia et al. (1976, 1977, 1979) argue that these shifts explain how language is used to create shared meaning. Understanding adult communicative competence thus requires, for this view, understanding "the processes by which interactants make cognitive assess-

ments of one another's character, emotional state, intentions, and situational understandings" (Delia & O'Keefe, 1979). And Hale & Delia (1976) identify role-taking, "the capacity to assume and maintain another's point of view [as] the basic social cognitive process in communication."

B. Effectiveness of Communicator Style

In contrast to this focus on the cognitive development of the speaker, another important strain of work in communicative competence within speech communication focuses on the effectiveness of the communicator as judged by his or her listener. Communicative competence as a "socially judged phenomenon" (Wiemann & Backlund, 1980) moves the locus of evaluation from the speaker (where the referential tradition places it) to the receiver of the communication. Thus, competence is seen less as a quality or ability of the speaker than as an attribution made by the listener, a judgment of the style of the communicator.

While "appropriateness of behavior" as a criterion is used by these researchers, the means of testing the judgment of what is appropriate is conceived of quite differently by speech communication researchers compared to the sociolinguists. In much of this research, criterion variables are attitude change, judgments of credibility, or the amount of attraction the listener reports feeling for the speaker. Harris (1977, cited in Wiemann & Backlund, 1980), for example, produced findings of greater listener attraction to "competent" interaction managers than to "incompetent" managers, even though background similarity factors were held constant.

The focus is quite clearly on effectiveness, particularly in persuasive communication. In probing the factors which might comprise the broader construct of "communicative competence," researchers have found, for example, a two factor solution of "impression management" and "transaction management" (Rushing, 1976,

cited in Wiemann & Backlund, 1980). Even when a three-factor solution like "empathy," "behavioral flexibility," and "interaction management" is generated to explain the construct, the factors are seen as in the service of the speaker's being able to employ "effective tactics" (Weinstein, 1969).

One means of managing effectiveness through control of communicator style, studied in persuasive communication, is the capacity of speakers to be self-monitors (Snyder, 1974, 1979). Generally, high self-monitors are described as people who are conscious of their external environment and able to pick up cues, evaluate information, and adapt their behavior. In contrast, low self-monitors are not attuned to others or to the environment and so are less likely and less able to seek out information or to adapt their behavior. Experiments using this construct generally reveal that high self-monitors make better (more effective) persuaders and are more successful in managing the impressions of others (Elliot, 1979; Miller & Kalbfleisch, 1981).

C. Communication Education's Skill Identification

While the constructivists are concerned with the development of cognitive interpersonal constructs, and the "effectiveness" school is interested in abstracting the factors within communicative competence, the communication education sub-group in the discipline has been faced with the demands of producing evidence of skill development in elementary and secondary schools and the challenges of assessing communication skill at the college level.

Various inventories of skills have been produced on the state level, and are being used to guide curriculum development (See, for example, the Massachusetts State Board of Education document in Backlund et al., 1982). Institutions of higher learning have produced exemption tests or college-wide evaluation instruments, e.g. the University of Wisconsin-Parkside's Communication

Competency Assessment Instrument (Rubin, 1982) and Alverno College's teaching materials and assessment instruments related to both social interaction and the communication areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and media (Alverno College Faculty, 1981).

To varying degrees, the examination of communicative competence as a set or list of skills has also focused on the underlying cognitive or social developmental factors. Unfortunately, in many cases, the rush to produce lists of skills under pressure from legislatures or departments of education has short-circuited the process of relating these inventories to the broader conceptualizations of the other traditions, or even to the use of these skills in everyday situations.

D. Methods

Largely experimental in research design, work in the first two areas has attempted to clarify conceptualizations of communicative competence, and proceeded to build theories through operationalization and testing. Delia et al. (1976, 1977, 1979) developed tests of social perspective-taking and cognitive complexity. Persuasion research has used experimental designs in which criterion variables (measures of attraction or attitude change) are counted as judgments of competence by listeners. Manipulation of organismic variables like high/low self-monitoring has been used to probe the effects of specific speaker qualities.

Little research has been pursued in the education-focused skill identification area, although Alverno is systematically validating the assessment instruments in communication areas (Friedman, Mentkowski, Earley, Loacker, & Diez, 1982).

E. Conclusions and Implications

The two research programs have generated different conclusions. Clark and Delia (1976, 1977) report finding developmental patterns and continue to refine

their theoretical integration of cognitive-developmental and social perspective-taking. While their work seems to represent a significant breakthrough in connecting theoretical frameworks, they have generally discounted the effects of situation in communicative competence. This may be a serious limitation to their work.

The other, rather abstract approach to probing the dimensions and factors of the construct of communication competence has produced findings which are difficult to link to one another, much less to the experiences of communicators. Moreover, the manipulations conducted in experimental settings have the same drawbacks that some referential studies manifest--they provide little information about actual communication.

To the degree that the identification of communication skills has been grounded in the theoretical frameworks available, these offer a valuable link between the researcher and practical communication situations. Regrettably, few have made use of that link in designing studies to expand the theoretical understandings and to test the validity of the competence lists.

These reflections about the conclusions of speech communication research suggest two implications:

1. While linking the idea of role-taking with the development of cognitive complexity and the development of communication skill is a good step, it must at some point be linked to the important findings of the sociolinguistic tradition. Perhaps the schemata developed for social perspective-taking include a means of including situational information in the assessment of the other's perspective. Indeed "situational understanding" is included by Delia & O'Keefe (1979), but overall, the idea of situation is given short-shrift in this school.

2. Situation may be the key to breaking the tight link between effectiveness and persuasion as well. Implied in the work of communication researchers who study communicative competence from the standpoint of communicator style is a competitive orientation, the goal of one communicator necessarily being to change the view of the other (or at least to manage it). Higgins et al. (1981) argue that interaction may focus on one or more of a variety of goals--including to initiate or maintain a social bond, to achieve a common definition of social reality, to achieve a specific self-presentation, to achieve production of a task or solution of a problem, and even to seek entertainment. Clearly some situations fall in the more collaborative plane, and a theory of communicative competence needs to address what would be effectiveness in those situations. By defining situations as universally persuasive through their choice of operationalizations, these researchers have ruled out an area of communication that needs to be probed.

A further link could be made by combining the study of communication as effective with the evaluation of the lists of skills produced by the communication education school. Students working together in varieties of non-competetive situations could supply the researcher with a means of probing the broader range of communication goals.

IV. Towards an Integration of the Three Traditions

Clearly all three traditions have captured aspects of the communication process and have focused their study using the assumptions and approaches of their disciplines. The argument I will develop in this section is that an integration of the three approaches could offer a more complete understanding of

communicative competence--and that the work of each tradition could be enriched through such an integration.

Indeed an argument for linking at least two parts of the traditions--the social and referential focuses--has been made as a part of speech act theory (Searle, 1969). While Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson (1967) were the first to posit the operation of content and relational messages in each utterance, the notion that speech acts do two things at once is increasingly recognized (see, for example, Clark & Clark, 1977; Goody, 1978; Halliday, 1973; and Higgins et al., 1981). Speech acts encode propositional content, or referential meaning, which has logical properties independent of context, and which is judged on its truth or well-formedness. It is what Goody (1978) calls "report," what Halliday (1973) calls "ideational," and what Clark & Clark (1977) refer to as governed by the "reality principle." But speech acts encode social content as well--"performative" meaning by which the statement itself IS an action. The social meaning depends on context, has pragmatic properties, and is judged not on truth but on appropriateness. Goody (1978) calls this aspect "command," Halliday (1973) terms it "interpersonal," and Clark & Clark (1977) identify for it a "cooperative principle."

While these two aspects of speech acts can be separated for purposes of analysis, they are not separated in "the state of nature" (Erickson, 1981), and, indeed, may often need to be linked more tightly for analysis than scholars have realized. Olson & Hildyard (1981) have pointed out that we often need the social to explain cognition--as in the case of a choice of referent that is mandated by the situation. There may be several accurate or truthful representations in the abstract, but only one that will work as a referent in the concrete situation. Moreover, demonstration of referential ability--the ability to produce certain

propositional meaning--may depend upon social or other situational factors, as in Whitehurst & Sonnenschein's (1981) contrasting of "knowing how" and "knowing when."

Perhaps directives give us the clearest sense of how the referential or propositional and the social or interpersonal aspects of a speech act interact. The propositional meaning of the following three utterances is roughly translatable as the same referential meaning as utterance #1:

1. Give me a soft drink, please.
2. Hey, throw me a Coke.
3. I'd appreciate your giving me a cola.

but they may have very different social messages, telling those able to observe the ongoing exchange how the speaker is defining the situation and his or her role in relationship to the others present.

For example, the second example implies a casual relationship and an assumption of the other as an equal; native speakers would think nothing of one teenager directing the utterance to another. Consider, however, the same utterance from a gardener to his employer, a society woman proud of her listing in the social register. The utterance would be marked as inappropriate, giving even the casual observer a start, and generating speculation about the relationship between the two persons or about the imminent dismissal of the employee. Without belaboring the obvious, one could point out a series of situations in which the third utterance could signal politeness of request, irony (in response to poor service) or even smoldering anger (in response to extremely poor service).

"Social meaning" in this sense covers the whole of the situation--setting, type of interaction, roles of participants relative to each other, relative status, various levels of goals, etc. And it refers not only to the social

meaning embedded in the choice of words ("give" vs. "throw") that would be "true" in general, but also to what is specific to this utterance given what has gone before within the interaction (the quality of service in the time preceding the request, for example). The contribution of the speech communication tradition's persuasion focus may be to reveal a third aspect of communicative competence, the directing or structuring function within ongoing interaction.

To examine this aspect further requires that we move beyond the limits of speech act theory, however, which cannot provide (and was not intended to produce) a theory of interaction. Dore (1979) has suggested a helpful conception of a larger unit of analysis, the conversational act; Weick (1979) has proposed the double interact, a linking of three utterance units. Whatever is ultimately used to examine natural interaction and to pursue experimental study, the notion of ongoingness of context and goal definition needs to be included, functioning in the structuring work done by a given speech act within that larger whole. For example, in many situations,

2. Hey, throw me a Coke.

could be analyzed as directing the social relationship goal or even an entertainment goal of the speaker in relationship to the other. It maintains, rather than attempts to change or establish, the social bond between the speakers. However, if the participants were not already acquainted, the same utterance could serve the purpose of establishing a social bond, signalling through its social aspect that the speaker wants to recognize the other as an equal and pursue small talk.

On the one hand, such an utterance reveals social content and indicates illocutionary force. On the other, it "sets up" the next move by the other, directing the flow of the interaction, while being open to being changed by

the other's next move. Goals change in an ongoing way throughout an interaction, sometimes in subtle ways, sometimes more drastically. These changes are communicated through individual utterances interpreted in the ongoing flow of discourse.

Structuring or directing aspects of an utterance are not clearly separable from the referential and social aspects, even as those two occur tightly tied together. But the role of structuring in interaction can be analyzed as a distinct functional aspect, one which regulates the movement of the interaction across utterances. Seen in the broader context of an ongoing interaction, then, the three aspects of communicative competence can be re-defined and expanded to show the work they perform together in creating interactional meaning:

A. Referential

Besides the propositional meaning of the utterance and the referential meaning of individual terms, we could include in this view of referential competence, the skill of making links to previous utterances, the creation of ongoing coherence of discourse. Such a view would focus on the lexical and syntactic skills needed to arrange the structure of sentences and the juxtaposition of words to convey the intended links. Truth and well-formedness would still be appropriate criteria for judgment of referential effectiveness, but they would be truth in relationship to the ideational content of previous utterances, well-formedness that takes into account previous references to objects and ideas across the flow of discourse.

B. Social

The social meaning of the utterance would be defined much the way the sociolinguistic tradition has defined it--tied to language as situated and reflective of the social roles of the participants. However, explicit ties to

the impact of the social or referential meaning should be considered part of the social aspect of competence. Such a view would focus on both lexical and pragmatic skills, judged from the standard of culturally determined appropriateness. The idea of "functionality" as part of social meaning would be divided into immediate function and a broader sense of function in relationship to the discourse as an ongoing whole.

C. Structuring

This aspect shares with the social the pragmatic focus on language as linked to speakers and their intentions in using language. As a functional, social competence, structuring needs to be tied to a recognition of the goal or goals of the interaction. Gleason & Weintraub (1978) offer a different perspective on that relationship between goals and structuring. In asserting that a mature speaker learns "to use language to organize and direct behavior," they argue that this "directive" function is not a social use, although originating in the interpersonal arena. Rather, they call it an "intrapersonal" behavior-planning function, using language to order thoughts and specify goals. Regardless of how one views the social aspect of structuring, it is clear that monitoring skill would be an important component, a necessary part of this aspect of communicative competence. Such a view would posit a process by which speakers evaluate the success of past structuring in meeting goals and decide on their next choices within the interaction. Effectiveness would be the criterion of structuring competence.

V. Implications

What are the implications of conceptualizing communicative competence as having referential, social, and structuring aspects? The paper will conclude with a discussion of three implications linked to the observations made earlier

about the separate traditions.

1. Such a conceptualization could improve articulation between/among the three traditions. While there has been some cross-referencing of studies in the three traditions, or disciplines within them, there are still many articles that fail to cite research outside their own tradition, even when other research is clearly related to the questions under consideration. Without recognition of the work being done in other, related areas, progress in the development of our understanding of human language use and development will be impaired.

By focusing on a conceptualization of communicative competence that attempts to make connections between the past work of all three disciplines, the valuable contributions of each could be brought to bear on the others. Moreover, it could support the burgeoning movement (Erickson, 1977) to find ways to link the work of quantitative and qualitative researchers in the area of human language and language development.

2. Such a conceptualization draws attention to the basic unit of communication as larger than the individual sentence, viz., as interactional. Part of the reason for the disparity in findings of competence or incompetence has been the definition of what will be studied and what will count as evidence in drawing conclusions. By focusing on interaction rather than on discrete choices from among those provided in an artificial task, referential communication researchers would be challenged to design more realistic experiments, yielding more generalizable conclusions. We might then begin to be able to see the extent to which referents are tied to situations and be able to evaluate the mutual influence of speakers' ongoing choices of subsequent use of referents in conversation.

Communication research would be encouraged to move beyond the definition of abstract factors and to find links to the work in communication education and

other disciplines. The suggestion is not to avoid the abstract or to deny its place in theorizing; rather, the need is to ground that theorizing and make sure it is applicable in "real" settings.

3. Such a conceptualization would recognize communicative competence as an ongoing, developmental human ability. Erickson (1981) suggests that socialization is a never-ending process, yet some conceptualizations of communicative competence have provided a rigid, abstract view of an adult standard of performance. Viewing conversation or interaction as a continually negotiated process leads to the examination of communicative competence as a processing and producing capability best discovered in natural talk. Such a view would call researchers in all traditions to reexamine why they study only small children or undergraduates in basic courses (whatever has been their "stock in trade"). It might well lead to more programmatic research pursuing questions across age groups and across situations, from simple to complex tasks, in a variety of goal contexts. Getting at the processes involved in the acquisition of beginning competence and in the ongoing refining of the capability is a challenge that sociolinguists need to face, moving beyond current work.

The identification of the three aspects of communicative competence--referential, social, and structuring--is only a beginning in the potential integration of the three separate traditions examined in this paper. However, because it appears to offer a way to bring a range of important work together in a new way, it offers benefits across all three traditions. Its application depends upon the collaborative communicating skills of the practitioners in the three areas--a level of communicative competence needed by effective researchers!

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